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ABSTRACT

A communication skills program, initiated in the Edgewood Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas, in 1974, as part of the Experimental Schools Program, was conducted as part of a locally designed and implemented effort to improve the academic achievement of its largely Mexican American student body. Coinciding with the initiation of the program, a questionnaire investigation was carried out to probe the perceptions of the schools' staff, principals, teachers, and a stratified random sample of comparison teachers. An external evaluation team was also selected to conduct classroom observations. Goals of the program were perceived as: (1) using the students' home language (Spanish) to improve their education; (2) making the environment more positive; and (3) making the pupils' education more relevant to their needs. A generally positive climate for the introduction of the program was seen by those questioned, with concern by principals and teachers for quality, quantity and timing of the curriculum materials. Modification of classroom climate toward openness and individualization of instruction was expected. Perceptions were found to be directionally congruent with the classroom observation results, although implementation was less than expected. The program was discontinued, due to cessation of materials production. (Author/JD)

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THE COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS PROGRAM IN THE EDGEWOOD SCHOOL PLAN: A CASE STUDY

by

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* * * *

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ABSTRACT

The Edgewood School Plan initiated a new thrust in fall 1974 called the communications skills program in five of its six schools in the Edgewood Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas. This experimental program, under the auspices of the National Institute of Education, was a part of a locally designed and implemented effort to improve the academic achievement of its largely Mexican American student body. The teachers received some training on the materials provided for six to eight weeks of implementation.

The research utilized questionnaires to probe the perceptions of the experimental schools staff members, principals, and teachers. Experimental teachers and a stratified random sample of comparison teachers also completed sections of the Dimensions of Schooling Questionnaire to provide data on their perceptions of classroom practices.

The investigation was conducted from the fourth to the sixth week of school, coinciding with the implementation of the communications skills program. The external evaluation team also carried out classroom observations via the Modified Observation Schedule and Record at the same time. A spring 1975 application of the research instruments was planned. Due to the cessation of materials production, the program was discontinued. The questionnaires were thus not reapplied as planned.

The goals for the new thrust, the communications skills program, were perceived by the experimental schools staff as: to improve the education of the students and to do so by utilizing the students' home language (Spanish), make the environment more positive, and make the education of these pupils more relevant to their needs. Bilingualism, through the use of English and Spanish in the instruction and classroom management and by teaching Spanish reading, was to enhance the students' self concept. The staff perceived a generally positive climate for the introduction of the new program, rating themselves, the internal evaluation team, and the principals as highly committed to and able to carry out the activities; the board, administration, teachers, and students were perceived as somewhat less committed and able. A diverse set of opinions about the parents was manifested.

The principals of the five implementing schools perceived the goals about like the experimental staff but placed primary emphasis on the improvement of reading and generally improved student learning. Bilingualism was of secondary importance to them. Their concerns about the program tended to be managerial: timely provision of materials, teacher training, and measurement of program results. Their ratings of the commitment and ability of the reference groups were close to those of the experimental staff members but were slightly more positive for the board, administration, and teachers. They expressed doubts about the amount of parental involvement expected in the program. The climate for the introduction of the communications skills program was seen as generally positive by the experimental schools principals.

The teachers charged with implementing the new program in the experimental schools perceived the goals as had their principals. Their concerns for

the program, too, nearly paralleled those of the principals: quality, quantity, and timing of the curricular materials for implementation. The teachers' ratings of the reference groups were almost exactly the same as those given by the principals with the exception that they rated their principals the highest of any group on commitment and on ability to carry out the program.

Modification of the classroom climate toward openness, including individualization of instruction, was expected as one result of the program. The experimental teachers saw themselves as moving toward individualization and open education practices. The comparison teachers saw themselves in much the same way except in the high school, where they perceived the activities to be more traditional. Both groups noted considerable use of Spanish in the classes.

Findings from a parallel study through classroom observations found the perceptions to be directionally congruent with the observation results. The degree of openness, however, was observed to be less than perceived at the middle and high schools and the amount of Spanish spoken in the experimental classes to be less than the perceived amount. No important difference in language usage was found between the treatment and comparison classes.

Implementation of the new program was not as widespread as indicated by the staff; about 33% of the 49 teachers was utilizing the materials as the primary vehicle of instruction. Fourteen percent did not use them at all. The principals' concerns for the teacher training needed for implementation, plus their and the teachers' concerns about the provision of the materials, appeared to have influenced the amount of implementation.

The use of Spanish in the classrooms, as expected from the program design, did not appear to have increased and was no different from the amount observed in comparison classes. Teachers perceived their classroom practices to be moving toward openness, particularly those related to individualization. Some differences were found between the experimental and comparison groups' perceptions but these were not borne out at the elementary and middle school levels; observations showed the two groups' practices to be about the same. Some difference was found at the secondary level, both in perceptions and in observations; the experimental groups' practices were somewhat less traditional than were the comparisons'.

Thus although the experimental staff members, principals, and teachers had generally perceived a favorable climate for the introduction of the communications skills program, implementation was considerably less than expected by the staff. These findings suggested that managerial concerns, both from the principals' and teachers' standpoint, may be crucial in effecting implementation. Their previous experiences with partial curriculum, combined with possession of only a few weeks of materials, appeared to mitigate against complete adoption and implementation in this case.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The Edgewood School Plan was initiated in September 1972 in the Edgewood Independent School District, San Antonio, Texas, as a part of the Experimental Schools Program of the US Office of Education. Later it was transferred to the National Institute of Education. The goal of the Edgewood project was to produce "educational compatibility" to meet the needs of its predominantly Mexican American study body, residing primarily in a low socioeconomic area. Six of the twenty-six Edgewood schools took part in the project: four elementary, one middle, and one high school. A 1971 planning grant to the Edgewood Independent School District resulted in the basic document for educational change, the Final Plan: Experimental Schools Project (2).

Most of the efforts during the first two years of the program were directed toward some immediately needed curricula, staff development, and an extensive planning exercise. (1, 7) The staff of the Edgewood School Plan (ESP), and administrators and teachers from the experimental schools, with some assistance from the community and students, examined the system and recommended certain changes and additions to the educational program. Special committees were established to study various aspects of the proposed changes. One of these, the ESP Philosophy Committee, developed an integral plan called the Communications Skills Program (CSP), which was to become the dominant theme of the project beginning in fall 1974. (3)

The external evaluation of the Edgewood experimental schools program was contracted to Development Associates, a private firm based in Washington, DC. The firm established offices in San Antonio to conduct the longitudinal study of the program, reporting both short and long term events and results.

In order to maximize the attribution of program effect studies of the experimental treatments, Development Associates, in conjunction with its technical panel of advisers and program officers from the National Institute of Education, selected two elementary, one middle, and one secondary school from those remaining in the district to serve as comparison to the experimental program. These comparison schools were chosen because of their similarity to the treatment schools in socioeconomic status of the area they served, the ethnic composition of the student body, standardized achievement scores, and motivation and self concept characteristics of the students.

The purpose of the present research was to provide interim data on the establishment of the Communications Skills Program and on its interaction within the ESP framework and the participating schools, and eventually, to link the findings to the overall evaluation of comprehensive change as formulated by the Edgewood School Plan. The study examined the perceptions of the teachers, principals, and members of the ESP central staff on the operation of the program to ascertain attitudinal aspects expected to influence the implementation of the new program thrust.

Some of the data collected in this investigation were reported earlier (1, 7) in the interim descriptions of the entire ESP process. The data

included in the present report were expected to be explanatory to the events that transpired during the third year of the project (1974-1975) and were also to be used in the general documentation of the project's entire life.*

The Communications Skills Program

In its March 1, 1974, report entitled Philosophy of Communications Skills and Personalizing Instruction (3), the ESP philosophy committee defined communications skills as the "abilities we use to express ourselves... listening (aural)...speaking (oral)...reading (graphic)...writing (graphic) ...and...non-verbal communication (gestures, art, music)..." That same document saw the program as "...the focus...in developing thought processes." The stated goal was to help the student develop his individual ability to understand and express ideas and feelings in Spanish and English."

The conceptual framework of the program consisted of six basic premises:

1. The community would play an active role in all aspects of the ESP communications skills program;
2. The program would promote personal and social development as well as academic development in the learner;
3. The concepts used would be formed by past experiences with communication as the organizing factor;
4. The student's home language would be utilized as a medium of instruction;
5. Each of the four communications areas would be developed in the student's home language before instructing him in the second language;
6. The needs of the individual student would be the focus of the program.

During the summer of 1974, teams of ESP staff members and some teachers, with guidance from volunteer parents, developed about six weeks of curricular materials for implementation when school began. These were directed primarily toward the development of the language arts through an interdisciplinary approach, that is, the communications skills were to be integrated into the study of all the subjects.

Research Approach

The basic approach utilized in this investigation was that of the case study. Questionnaires were prepared to elicit the perceptions of those involved in the development, implementation, and supervision of the communications skills program and some related general experimental schools program activities. Two general areas were probed:

1. dimensions of the instructional approach, and
2. perceptions about the implementation of the program.

*A draft of the general information of this study was prepared in 1975 but research priorities precluded publication of the report at that time.

The first was studied through the teachers in the implementation and comparison schools. The second was examined through the views of the Edgewood School Plan staff members, principals, and teachers.

The study did not attempt to incorporate all of the stated communications skills or general ESP goals into the research. Corroboration of the project implementation, through classroom observations, was studied longitudinally, and reported separately. (12) Only the general findings of that investigation were incorporated with those of the present study to compare perceived and observed practices. The affective components included in the CSP goals were studied annually and were reported separately (6, 9, 13) and in conjunction with the cognitive variables (5, 7). These latter were also examined and reported independently of the affective variables (4, 14). A study of the curricular materials and their implementation was the subject of a separate publication. (8) In summary, then, the present study was seen as supplemental and partially explanatory to the general evaluation study of the experimental schools program.

Instrumentation

Utilizing the stated objectives of the communications skills program and the Edgewood School Plan as guides, the researchers prepared and/or adapted interview schedules that would provide needed information about the conceptualization, management, and operation of the two projects. One of the portions of the schedule, the Dimensions of Schooling Questionnaire (11), was furnished by the authoring institution, along with research results from several sites in Canada and California. The other portions of the instrument were developed locally, with reviews by members of the technical panel of the external evaluation team, followed by field testing with small samples of each type of personnel to be interviewed. Some revisions were made and the schedules were printed.

The questionnaire contained, then, three sections. The first, sought opinions from the teachers, principals, and ESP staff about the operation of the program. The second contained sections specific to each of these target groups and probed their participation in the program. These sections are included in Appendix A.* In these sections, the respondents were asked to rate certain categories of the personnel that were included in the total ESP system. Perceptions were elicited on commitment, active support of, and ability to carry out the communications skills program and the experimental schools program in general. The reply categories were none, low, medium, and high, scored on a zero to three point scale, with alternatives provided for "don't know" and "no reply." The wording of the questions was made appropriate to the intended respondent group.

The third section contained the dimensions of schooling questionnaire and was applicable only to the implementing and comparison teachers.

*Portions of this instrument were analyzed and reported earlier (7) and are excluded from this appendix.

(Appendix B) The components of this measurement device, used in the present study, were:

1. pupil assessment strategies,
2. student pacing,
3. development/selection of curricular materials,
4. teacher focus,
5. teacher role, and
6. assistance to pupils.

In the third component, development/selection of materials, the teachers choose one of the provided alternatives as best explaining the reality for her own situation or classroom. In the other five, each teacher indicates a percentage that represents the proportion of time that particular alternative is practiced in her classroom. She may, then, indicate some percent of time in all or several of the alternatives.

Samples

Five of the six experimental schools participated in the communication skills program to some degree. The principal in each of these was interviewed. Similarly, the ESP on site staff member in each school, charged with the day to day assistance to the teachers, was included. The ESP component directors were surveyed as general supervisors for the program. The total ESP staff interviewed was 10.

The ESP elementary sample represented about 40% of the implementing teachers in grades K-2, in which the program treatment was concentrated, and were selected randomly by grade (N=31). The elementary ESP sample was divided: school A=11, B=10, C=10. The number of teachers in the comparison schools was smaller and a stratified random sample was drawn proportionately by grade, numbering 12, evenly divided between schools E and F. Thus the total elementary sample was 43. (See Table 1.)

Few teachers were implementing communications skills in the one middle and one secondary school.* All thirteen of those designated as treatment in the middle school were included. A proportionate random sample was drawn from the comparison middle school.** There were only five implementing teachers in the one grade, ninth, in which the program was being conducted in the ESP high school. An equal number of language arts teachers was drawn randomly from the comparison high school.

The comparison samples were drawn primarily to ascertain that changes emanating from the communications skills program were different from those extant in the district. Because of their random selection, they were expected to be representative of the teachers at those grades in the comparison schools.

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*The ESP middle and high schools had developed special approaches to these studies for their treatment grades and rooms, thus the low incidence of designated communications skills implementation.

**The experimental and comparison classes contained both seventh and eighth grade students.

Table 1: Distribution of Teacher Sample by Group and Level

Group	Level/Grade/Number			Total
	Elementary (Grades K-2)	Middle (Grades 7-8)	Secondary (Grade 9)	
Experimental	31	13	5	49
Comparison	12	7	5	24
Total	43	20	10	73

Data Collection

Each interviewer was trained thoroughly on the instruments, assuring that every question was interpreted correctly. Each then made appointments with the designated interviewees to provide sufficient time to properly conduct the interview. The schedules required about 35 minutes to complete and were completed during the third to the fifth week of communications skills program implementation.

Each subject was assured the privacy of his answers to the questions: identification numbers were used rather than names. A copy of the interview schedule was given to each subject so he could follow along during the interview in case he wanted to inspect the content. No one refused the interview. Most of the schedules were completed after school hours and were spaced to avoid detaining the persons unduly.

The dimension of schooling was marked by the subject. Doubts were clarified as the section was filled out. After checking that all questions were answered or the respondent had indicated "don't know" or "no reply," the interview was closed with an expression of gratitude for the time and effort expended.

Data Analysis

The original intent of this set of interviews was to provide a description of the early phase of the implementation process. The data analyses were limited primarily to descriptive statistics because of the size of the samples and since the general climate for implementation was the desired product.

Average ratings were calculated for each of the general questionnaire items. Average percentages were calculated by school and group, experimental and comparison, on the dimensions of schooling components of pupil assessment, student pacing, teacher focus, teacher role, and assistance to pupils. Frequency distributions of replies were determined for development/selection of materials.

Limitations

The study was developed to capture the perceptions of the teachers, ESP staff, and principals as they began the implementation of the communications

skills program in the fall of 1974. The interviews were to be repeated in the spring, expecting to capture their perceptions after a substantial experience with the program. About two weeks after the initial interviews were conducted, then the materials completed during the previous summer were exhausted. More units were expected but no more were produced.* By the time it became apparent that the program would not be continued, at least that year, few further details could be expected and the subsequent application of the instrument was abandoned.** Thus, this single point in time measurement, although about midway through the short term implementation, dealt primarily with expectations rather than with summary judgments about communications skills as designed by the experimental program.

*The ESP staff members reported that their time and other resources did not permit the creation and reproduction of the rather massive amounts of instructional materials needed for full implementation. Many of the objectives and some of the general design were incorporated into materials developed and implemented the following year.

**Some of the same perception measures were utilized in later portions of the research of the program. The focus of the presently reported investigation was on the communications skills program while the final perceptions did not probe that effort. Relationships between the present and later perceptions were therefore not attempted in this report.

CHAPTER II: FINDINGS

The experimental schools documents had made it clear that the ultimate goal of the effort was to improve student achievement. The Final Plan had devoted nearly one-fourth of its pages to the discussion of teachers and the improvement in teaching, which was to lead to enhanced learning. The climate of the classrooms was to become open to innovation, especially in those activities that would take the students' learning and affective characteristics into account. Individualized instruction was viewed as one of the important ways this was to be done.

The communications skills program was designed to partially fulfill these objectives. It resulted from an intensive planning effort undertaken by the Edgewood School Plan staff, in conjunction with some principals, teachers, parents, and students. The external evaluation study of the development and initial implementation of the communications skills program, conducted through the perceptions of the three primary actor groups involved - ESP staff members, principals, and teachers of the ESP schools - was regarded as a process description phase of the overall evaluation plan. The perceptions of each of the three groups are reported in partial explanation of the environment in which the communications skills program was undertaken. Additionally, teacher perceived classroom activities are reported to describe a further dimension of the beginning of the new program, its implementation. This dimension is studied with the perceptions of the comparison school teachers to ascertain possible impact of the Edgewood School Plan communications skills program on the classroom activities.

Experimental Program Staff Perceptions

The Edgewood School Plan personnel were substantially involved in the implementation of the communications skills program. They had worked for several months in planning the program and in writing, with the assistance of some teachers, the materials to be used in it. The perceptions of the 10 interviewed staff members, then, of this new thrust were expected to have an important influence on its functioning.*

In describing the planning process, one of the salient points given by nearly all the interviewees was that the planning had been done jointly by the participants. That is, they saw the mutual involvement of the ESP staff, principals, teachers, parents, and students as highly significant in the process. The communications skills program was not a "mandated from above" project, but one which many people had helped to evolve.

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*Appendix A contains the sections of the questionnaires that were common to all respondent groups, followed by sections unique to any one group.

Although sometimes worded differently, the perceived communications skills program goals statements were quite uniform:

- improve the reading level of students,
- make the students bilingual,
- make education relevant, and
- comply with the needs of the students and the community.

The latter goal was emphasized by most ESP staff respondents, indicating that this was an important element in the determination and formulation of the program. The procedures used to identify the needs included a formal needs assessment survey conducted by the internal evaluation staff, standardized test results, and classroom monitoring, according to the ESP staff. Eight of the ten staff members made some mention of the Final Plan provisions in connection with these answers, usually noting that these "were also congruent with the needs expressed in the ESP plan."

The staff expressed general satisfaction with their roles in the process of program determination and formulation but they also noted that at times they felt frustration when the resolution of differences among the planning process participants had been difficult. Aside from the new program itself, the staff saw unification of the experimental staff members as one of the most important products of the communications skills effort. A typical explanation was that "each component of ESP had previously gone its own way in the work but now we are all united to accomplish the goals of the communications skills program." Defining roles, improving communications within the staff, and giving a sense of direction to the project (ESP as a whole) were the contributions of the ESP director and component directors in the decision to carry out the planning that resulted in the communications skills program, according to the ESP staff.

In describing the nature of the planning process, the experimental program staff emphasized, and often used the same words to describe it, as "systems analysis" and "task oriented group process." They were in unanimous agreement that the work had been well organized. Only two deficiencies were mentioned with any frequency: insufficient research results available about such projects and lack of specific information about "what programs are working in ESP." It should be noted that every staff member, somewhere in the interview, was complimentary about the needs assessment survey conducted by the internal evaluation team.

Asked to rank their priorities for the 1974-1975 school year, the staff's composite ratings, from highest to lowest, were:

1. reading improvement
2. bilingualism
3. pleasant study atmosphere
4. making education relevant to student needs
5. provide adequate inservice training on teaching Spanish reading
6. community service

It should be pointed out, however, that the individual ratings varied considerably from this composite. A group of four interviewees placed community service first or second in priority. Bilingualism was usually first on the lists on which it appeared but it was absent from three lists. Spanish inservice training was not present on four lists but it was first on one list, second on two others. In general, these same

priorities were confirmed in their statements of the primary purposes of ESP; they nearly unanimously named two: provide a better education for the students and do that through making education more relevant to the students.

The staff was optimistic about the possible ESP accomplishments during the remainder of the project's life. "Our first hard data on student achievement in the treatments" and "cooperation of staff, principals, teachers, parents, and the community" were expected accomplishments for the 1974-1975 school year. Over the longer period, through June 1977, they felt they would make significant progress toward evaluation of the entire Edgewood School Plan program, make the educational system more relevant to the needs of the students, open the district decision making system to more members of the community, and help the students become more bilingual.

The most frequently mentioned difficulties in implementing the communications skills program included:

- teacher confusion about roles
- teacher reluctance to use Spanish in class
- high volume of student testing

Little explanation of these was offered but most ESP staff members noted some progress in the two teacher items but saw little relief from the volume of testing.

They saw the strengths of the ESP staff as "commitment to ESP" and "skills in staff development." Although no one item received many mentions, the named weaknesses of the staff were ambiguity in decisions, lack of decision making, role confusion, ego involvement, and lack of problem solving skills.

The most variable responses, viewing them across the several questions, were in regard to parental knowledge and involvement in the program.* They tended to agree that the parents had been "asked what they wanted" but that the replies had differed widely, especially in the areas of teaching Mexican culture and Spanish, resulting in some confusion. Substantial disagreement occurred in their responses to the question about how the parents felt about the experimental program, ranging from "very favorable" to "undecided." The interviewees often qualified their responses, expressing the opinion that the parents generally "want the program to succeed" but "they tend to be concerned with the teaching of Spanish" (parents did not want emphasis on teaching Spanish). The staff doubted that the parents understood the philosophy of either the Edgewood School Plan or of the communications skills program.

Asked to rank the involvement groups on "credit for whatever progress the communications skills program would make during the coming year,"

*Three ESP parent-community meetings were monitored during this period and the attendance, excluding professional staff was 37, 21, and 22, respectively.

the experimental schools staff listed, from highest to lowest:

1. teachers
2. ESP staff
3. ESP director
4. internal evaluation team
5. parents

and several noted that the school board, administration, and the principals were not primarily involved in the implementation and therefore should not be included in this ranking. Conversely, asked who should receive the blame for what might not be accomplished, brought a surprisinly uniform reply, typified by "everyone, including Washington, DC."

To further probe the perceived climate in which the Edgewood School Plan personnel worked, each of the interviewees was asked to rate the major involved groups in the conduct of the experimental program, on a none=0 to high=3 scale. The results generally agreed with the narrative statements made by the staff throughout the questionnaire.

The interviewees perceived the school board and administration commitment and support to be approximately moderate on educational change generally and specifically to ESP. Their explanations primarily centered on these two groups' "preoccupation with the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic" and their "expressed doubts about bilingualism and the teaching of Spanish." They also noted that the board and administration had to supervise many programs in the district and that their support ratings probably would necessarily not be much different among the several programs. That is, they felt that the board and administration did not have the time to be much more involved. (Table 2)

The highest ratings on commitment to educational change, commitment to ESP, active in support of ESP, and ability to carry out the ESP program were accorded the ESP central staff and its internal evaluation team. These two, plus the principals of the ESP schools, were also highest on the ratings of influence on the ESP priorities. The principals and parents were generally next highest in the commitment ratings to educational change and ESP. With the exception of the commitment to educational change, the teachers and students were rated similar to the school board and administration. Teachers were seen as moderately committed to change in general.

The ten ESP staff members interviewed were asked to make two separate ratings of the ESP principals, one as a group and one for each of them individually, since their interaction with the ESP central staff and with teachers was an important link between conceptualization of the program and its implementation. Considerable differences were evident from ratings of the principals; the staff members' replies for any one of the principals showed little variation. The general climate, in so far as the linkage was concerned, was perceived as positive. They did not perceive that same condition with one principal, generally, and they saw another as weaker in commitment and support than in the other four. The ESP staff saw itself as working in a mixed climate of principal support for the program and with the ability to carry out the Edgewood School Plan and the communications skills program. The few explanations proffered tended to concentrate on "resistance to the teaching of Spanish"

and "undue concern with reading skills in English" as the differences between the principals rated low from those rated high.

Table 2: ESP Staff Members' Ratings* of Selected Groups toward Educational Change, the Edgewood School Plan, and the Communications Skills Program

REFERENCE GROUP	Committed to Educational Change		Committed to ESP		Active in support of ESP		Ability to carry out ESP		Ability to carry out communications skills program		Influence on ESP priorities	
	N	Av.	N	Av.	N	Av.	N	Av.	N	Av.	N	Av.
District Officials												
Board	8	1.5	8	1.5	9	1.4	NA		NA		7	1.5
Administration	8	1.7	9	1.1	8	1.0	7	1.2	6	1.3	9	1.4
ESP Participants												
Central Staff	9	3.0	9	3.0	9	2.8	8	2.2	8	2.1	9	2.6
Principals (group)	9	2.5	9	2.1	9	2.1	8	2.0	8	2.1	9	2.6
Internal Evaluators	9	3.0	9	3.0	9	2.8	8	2.2	7	2.2	9	2.7
Teachers	8	2.0	8	1.5	8	1.2	7	1.8	7	2.0	8	1.6
Parents	10	2.5	9	2.3	8	2.0	NA		NA		9	2.4
Students	NA		8	1.3	8	1.0	NA		NA		9	1.7
ESP Principals (individually)**												
1	6	1.1	5	0.6	5	0.8	6	1.0	6	0.8	6	1.0
2	7	3.0	7	3.0	7	2.8	7	2.7	7	2.2	7	2.4
3	6	2.3	6	2.3	6	2.5	6	2.1	6	1.6	6	2.1
4	6	2.3	6	2.5	6	2.5	6	2.0	6	2.0	6	2.1
5	5	2.4	5	2.0	5	1.6	4	2.0	4	1.7	7	1.7
6	6	3.0	6	3.0	6	3.0	6	2.6	6	2.3	6	2.8

*"Don't know" and "no reply" responses were not included in the calculation of the average ratings. NA=not applicable.

**The group and individual ratings were obtained separately and are not necessarily mathematical functions of each other. The order of individuals in this list does not coincide with the order of schools in other tables.

In summary, the ESP staff interviews showed enthusiasm for the planning process that involved them, principals, teachers, and some parents and students. The needs assessment survey, they felt, had given concrete evidence for program direction. Further, they perceived the communications skills program as emanating from that process and speaking to the major goals of the Edgewood School Plan: improving education for the students

and accomplishing this, in part, by making the education more relevant. The use of the home language, Spanish, and the promotion of bilingualism were seen as important elements in relevancy.

The interviewees exhibited substantial confidence in their abilities and commitment to ESP and to their abilities to conduct the communications skills program. They perceived the school board, administration, teachers, and students to be somewhat less favorably inclined toward certain aspects of the program, particularly those that involved increased fluency in Spanish and some related culture activities. They rated principals, as a group, nearly as committed and able as the ESP staff although they perceived some important differences among the principals. The general ratings on parental commitment were relatively high but within this, decided differences of opinions were tendered by separate ESP staff members.

As a generality, then, the interviewed ESP staff members perceived themselves as able to carry out the tasks they saw as mandated both in the Final Plan document and in the results of the needs assessment survey. They expressed considerable optimism about the academic year's activities and about the concluding years of the Edgewood School Plan. They perceived a somewhat mixed receptivity to the experimental program and to the communications skills project but generally expected that substantial progress would be made in 1974-1975.

Experimental Schools Principals' Perceptions

The principal in each of the five schools indicated as implementing the communications skills program as interviewed on the same dimensions as the Edgewood School Plan staff. They had been involved in the extensive planning exercise conducted by the ESP staff. One result of a portion of the definition of direction activities included in the planning process had been the expression of their role as instructional leaders in their schools. This was perceived by them as an increased emphasis within the experimental schools program. They described, in general terms, the planning effort as one of cooperation among the important elements involved in the Edgewood School Plan and expressed some satisfaction with the effort and its outcomes.

The goals of the communications skills program were seen by the principals as a renewed emphasis on the improvement of student academic performance. All five specifically noted reading as an important objective for enhancement. Their comments, more than any group interviewed, highlighted the interdisciplinary and integrated approaches inherent in the communications skills program. Although relegated to secondary importance, they also noted that the use of the children's home language would be of value to the program, and they were the only interviewed group to express the feeling that this would increase the students' self concept. The five principals were concerned that the new treatment program be adequately evaluated. Two specifically said that the evaluation should concentrate on this objective rather than on general measurement throughout the K-12 grade span. Two principals expressed some doubt about the plan to "move away from traditional education approaches without research results to guide the change."

In a section unique to the principals' interview schedule, they were asked to describe their particular problems in implementing the communications skills program. All of them, in one way or another, suggested that any difficulties arising probably would be about the same as those encountered in implementing any new program. This was emphasized as they discussed the introduction of units, as was being done at the time with the communications skills packets, rather than providing a curriculum for the year, which, they said, was "typical" for new programs. Similarly, they felt that insufficient teacher orientation and training had been provided but this, too, was not unusual. The most specific concern appeared to be about whether the instructional materials would be available when needed in the classrooms.* Two noted possible future budget problems in maintaining the supply of materials after federal support was withdrawn. "Quality control" of both materials and instruction, and "the grading system for the units" were each mentioned once.

The principals' major priorities for the academic year did not vary much from those of the ESP staff: improvement in the reading performance of and providing for the needs of the students. Only one principal listed any aspect of bilingualism or the teaching of Spanish and this was related to improved self concept of the students. Other priority items by one or more principals included "coordination of ESP and the regular school program," increased student discipline, and maintenance of teacher morale as important objectives for the academic year.

The weaknesses in the communications skills program and in the general ESP operation were perceived as specific rather than general by the principals; they emphasized "quality of the curriculum units," with some guarded comments about reproduction deficiencies, as a potential problem. Four of the five principals had experienced teacher complaints about the language dominance placement of some of the students in classes. They commented on changes of student assignment required because of the dominance measurement and described these as negative for management and instruction.**

Despite these points of possible difficulty, the ESP principals interviewed expressed optimism about the coming year and expected to make progress toward the improvement of student academic performance. They were particularly positive about their newly emphasized role as instructional leaders and expected that this would serve to effect coordination and cooperation. One aspect of the new program, increased individualization of instruction, was seen as singularly important and likely to help them more than any other.

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*Materials for about six weeks of instruction were disseminated to the schools at the beginning of the school year. More were expected.

**For a study of the ESP instrument developed and the placement process, see: CERVANTES, ROBERT A.; THEIMER, WILLIAM C. JR. & JONES, EARL. Language dominance test development and instructional placement: a case study. San Antonio, Texas, Development Associates, 1976.

The five ESP principals' ratings of the involvement groups in the experimental school effort and in carrying out the communications skills project were slightly higher than those made by the ESP staff, reaffirming their statements about cooperation. (Table 3) Their replies were also more uniform, denoting substantial agreement among them. An exception to the higher markings, but not seriously different, was that they rated themselves, the ESP central staff, and the internal evaluation team slightly lower than had the ESP staff. They saw their influence on priorities for the experimental program as the strongest of all the referenced groups when they rated the principals as a whole group. The individual ratings, however, did not equal the group mean and when queried about this difference, they noted that "together we have much more influence than separately."

Both in their ratings and in their discussions, the principals expressed doubts about the participation of parents in the program. They noted, specifically, that few parents were appearing to assist with the implementation of communications skills and that the orientation meetings conducted for the community had drawn relatively small numbers of community members. Two mentioned that "some parents" had been involved with the curriculum writing teams during the summer.

In review, the principals felt that the planning effort had been beneficial and that their newly defined role as instructional leader would enhance program progress. They listed improved academic achievement through the communications skills program as the major goal. Secondarily, they expected that the use of the student's home language in the instructional process would aid in obtaining higher achievement and would enhance self concept. Most of the principals expected better reading skills to be the probable accomplishment of the project.

The problems with the program, as described by the principals, were primarily managerial in nature: the presentation of units rather than a curriculum, further teacher training, and the provision of the communications skills packets when needed. They noted that these problems were not unique to ESP but were those that generally occur when a new program is injected into the schools.

The ESP principals were moderately enthusiastic about the progress for the school year. They rated most of the involved reference groups' commitment and ability as medium or better; somewhat higher than the ratings given by the ESP staff members. In general, they viewed the communications skills program with hope, recognized some possible difficulties, and expected that the considerable commitment of the several staff levels would bring about some improvement in student achievement.

Table 3: ESP Principals' Ratings* of Selected Groups toward Educational Change, the Edgewood School Plan, and the Communications Skills Program

REFERENCE GROUP	Committed to Educational Change		Committed to ESP		Active in support of ESP		Ability to carry out ESP		Ability to carry out CSP		Influence on ESP priorities	
	N	Av.	N	Av.	N	Av.	N	Av.	N	Av.	N	Av.
District Officials												
Board	5	2.0	5	1.6	5	1.4	NA		NA		5	1.6
Administration	5	2.4	4	1.7	4	2.0	5	2.0	5	2.0	4	1.5
ESP Participants												
Central Staff	5	2.4	5	2.0	5	2.2	5	2.6	4	2.0	4	1.5
Principals (group)**	5	2.4	5	2.4	5	2.2	5	2.4	3	2.3	5	2.6
Internal Evaluators	5	2.0	5	2.2	5	2.2	5	2.0	3	2.0	4	2.6
Teachers	4	2.0	4	1.5	3	2.0	4	2.5	4	2.2	4	1.5
Parents	5	1.8	5	1.6	5	1.4	NA		NA		3	1.6
Students	NA		2	1.0	2	1.0	NA		NA		2	1.0
ESP Principals (individually)**												
1	5	1.8	5	1.8	5	1.8	5	2.4	4	2.5	5	1.2
2	4	2.2	4	2.2	4	2.5	4	2.2	4	1.6	4	1.6
3	4	2.2	4	2.2	4	2.2	4	1.6	3	1.3	4	1.5
4	4	1.6	4	2.2	4	2.2	4	1.6	3	1.0	4	1.5
5	4	2.5	3	2.6	4	2.0	4	2.2	4	2.2	3	2.0
6	4	2.6	4	2.6	4	2.6	4	2.2	3	2.0	4	2.5

*"Don't know" and "no reply" responses were not included in the calculation of the average ratings. NA=not applicable.

**The group and individual ratings were obtained separately and therefore are not necessarily mathematical functions of each other. The order of individuals in this list does not coincide with the order of schools in other tables.

Experimental Schools Teachers' Perceptions

The forty-nine interviewed ESP teachers, all designated as implementing the communications skills program in their classes, presented a surprisingly uniform pattern on most of the opinions solicited. The few exceptions tended to be isolated cases and did not have much effect on the results. Further, the similarities between their perceptions and those of the principals were striking. (Since absolute privacy was guaranteed, no undue influence was believed to have been brought to bear on their expressed opinions.)

Agreeing with the principals, only two communications skills goals were of importance to the teachers: improved general student performance and especially reading. They, too, were concerned with some managerial aspects of the communications skills program, specifically whether the materials would arrive in time (at the time of the interviews, some teachers were almost to the end of those furnished at the beginning of the academic year), and whether the materials were just isolated units or whether they were part of an organized curriculum. A further dimension of this concern was the possibility that the new materials would not "fit" the pattern used for the development of the standardized achievement tests, thus causing students to decline in scores, not due to lowered learning but to the "gap" between what was studied and what was tested.

Aside from the one ESP school that was not implementing the communications skills materials, there were other and unexpected differences in treatment. In a section unique to the "implementing" teachers, when asked about the units, seven of the forty-nine indicated that they were not using them. Additionally, eighteen noted that they used the units only as supplementary to the regular instruction program, and another eight noted they used the skills packets "about half the time." The remaining sixteen listed the communications skills materials as the primary vehicle of instruction. They also indicated a very wide range of other materials being used in combinations for particular subgroups or to supplement the primary lesson base materials. These included state adopted texts, out of adoption texts, units they or other teachers had written, previous ESP materials, and numerous agency and commercial items.

The teachers could be said to have exhibited a "cautious optimism" about the communications skills project and the experimental schools program in general. They expressed satisfaction that teacher representatives had been included in the ESP planning process. A frequently mentioned benefit from the planning was the emphasized role of the principal as the instructional leader. A typical comment was that "now I won't be torn between two masters." Like the principals, the teachers said they saw little parental involvement. In several cases, the teachers noted that their parent-teacher organization was functioning quite well before and still was; most noted that no parent had visited the classroom so far that academic year. None of the teachers listed a parent as working with them in the instructional process.*

The teachers saw the commitment and abilities of the board, administration, ESP staff, themselves, parents, and students almost exactly as had the principals. Interestingly, they listed their abilities to carry out the communications skills program as between low and medium, again, as had their principals. Two exceptions between their ratings and those of their

*Classroom observations conducted by the external evaluation team during that same period confirmed this; one parent visitor was observed and no parents working with the classes were found at the specific times the observations were conducted.

principals were evident: a slightly lowered, but still positive, rating of the internal evaluation team; much higher ratings for the principals. Two principals had been viewed somewhat less favorably than the others by both the ESP staff and the principals as a group; those principals' teachers, however, almost unanimously marked the highest rating, a 3.

Bilingualism had been stated as an important goal in itself and also to be used as an affective tool to enhance self concept. The use of Spanish was to be increased during the implementation of the communications skills program. Most teachers perceived an increased use of Spanish both in instruction and management. While the percentage was reported from 0 to 75%, the majority clustered at about 40% Spanish, 60% English. Several noted that the Spanish instruction was furnished by an aide in their classrooms.

Teacher Perceived Classroom Practices

The sections utilized from the Dimensions of Schooling Questionnaire obtained the perceptions of the teachers on several measures designed to indicate openness in education.* Each teacher's stated major emphases on the items within each of the components were analyzed to determine the trends in that classroom. These were then aggregated to note school, level, and group (experimental and comparison) averages. Finally, these were examined together to ascertain the generalized status of openness in the classrooms.

Pupil Assessment

The assessment procedure section contains four statements:

- No formal tests are used; evaluation is based on work samples and anecdotal reports.
- Evaluation instruments used were developed in this classroom.
- Evaluation instruments used were developed within the school (by other teachers or in other years).
- Standardized (commercial) instruments are used.

One of the most important findings from this component was the extreme variability reported for the schools. The major emphases on any one item within a component were not uniform within a school nor within each of the groups, experimental and comparison. (Table 4) A considerable independence was exhibited.

The most frequently reported pupil assessment procedure in the elementary schools was observations of pupil performance, with no formal tests used as primary assessment. In the middle schools, assessment appeared to be

*Respondents indicated the percentage of time devoted to each type of activity in their normal classroom operation and the several activities had to total 100% (Appendix B).

a combination of observations of performance, tests made specifically for the classrooms, and tests made within and for the school. The secondary emphasis was heavily toward the tests made for the particular classes. Assessment procedures among the ESP and comparison elementary and middle school classrooms were reported to be similar; the comparison high school teachers utilized class specific tests more than did the experimental teachers.

Table 4: Distributions of Teacher Perceived Practices in Pupil Assessment Procedures*

Level/Group/School		Total N	No formal test**	Classroom developed	School developed	Standardized test
			Av. %	Av. %	Av. %	Av. &
Elementary	ESP A	11	40	35	5	30
	ESP B	10	44	24	4	28
	ESP C	10	5	15	40	40
All ESP Elementary		31	29	21	16	32
Elementary	Comp E	6	42	20	10	28
	Comp F	6	73	11	4	12
All Comparison Elem.		12	57	15	7	20
Middle	ESP G	13	40	40	19	1
	Comp H	7	34	33	33	0
Secondary	ESP I	5	32	68	0	0
	Comp J	5	8	90	0	2

*Because of rounding, some rows do not total 100%.
**Assessment based primarily on observations of performance.

The statements used in the section on the timing of student assessment included:

- Assessment takes place at a few specified intervals (e.g., at the end of each term).
- Assessment takes place at more frequent intervals (e.g., monthly or weekly).
- Assessment may take place at any time (e.g., depending on pupil readiness).

The differences in the timing of assessment also varied considerably, with pupil readiness most prevalent in the experimental and comparison schools. (Table 5) One experimental elementary and the experimental high school, however, reported monthly and weekly assessment as the most frequently used.

The differences in the timing of assessment also varied considerably with pupil readiness as the major criterion in the elementary schools. The distribution in the middle schools tended to be about divided across the suggested assessment timings. The ESP and comparison high schools, however, indicated monthly/weekly periods to be the major timing intervals.

Table 5: Distribution of Teacher Perceived Practices in Assessment Timing*

Level/Group/School		Total N	Specific Intervals**	Weekly & Monthly	Pupil Readiness
			Av. %	Av. %	Av. %
Elementary	ESP A	11	12	56	32
	ESP B	10	19	29	52
	ESP C	10	18	32	50
All ESP Elementary		31	16	39	44
Elementary	Comp E	6	8	21	71
	Comp F	6	20	20	60
All Comparison Elem.		12	14	20	62
Middle	ESP G	13	24	36	40
	Comp H	7	43	17	40
Secondary	ESP I	5	30	45	25
	Comp J	5	8	21	71

*Because of rounding, some rows do not total 100%.
**Specific intervals is defined as end of six weeks or term.

The assessment focus component, the size group for which the assessment procedures were targeted, asked the teachers to note the proportions applicable to their classes. The alternatives were that assessment procedures are:

- the same for all students in the school.
- the same for all students in the class.
- the same for each student within a subgroup of the class but differ from subgroup to subgroup.
- different for each student in the class.

The assessment focus component showed subgroup specific assessment as the frequent testing arrangement in the elementary schools with whole class testing following closely. (Table 6) While there was a great deal of variation among the schools, the focus was about alike in the experimental and comparison groups.

Table 6: Distribution of Teacher Perceived Practices in Focus of Assessment Procedures*

Level/Group/School		Total N	School Focus	Class Focus	Subgroup Focus	Each Student
			Av. %	Av. %	Av. %	Av. %
Elementary	ESP A	11	5	32	43	20
	ESP B	10	10	24	46	20
	ESP C	10	0	50	45	5
All ESP Elementary		31	5	35	45	14
Elementary	Comp E	6	3	28	68	1
	Comp F	6	13	27	55	5
All Comparison Elem.		12	8	28	61	3
Middle	ESP G	13	0	50	23	27
	Comp H	7	33	43	20	4
Secondary	ESP I	5	0	50	20	30
	Comp J	5	19	79	0	2

*Because of rounding, rows may not total 100%.

The experimental middle school teachers divided their focus for assessment among class as a whole, subgroups, and individuals. The comparison teachers distributed their assessment practices among school as a whole, class as a whole, and subgroups within the classes; there was little emphasis on the individual. Class as a whole dominated the comparison high school testing. Although the highest of the possible foci in the ESP high school, it was much lower than comparison (50 to 79%, respectively).

In general, although classrooms and schools varied considerably on the pupil assessment measure, the experimental and comparison groups were quite similar at the elementary level. Variation was also great among the middle and secondary classrooms. Although neither experimental nor comparison was predominantly emphasizing the practices in assessment that are expected in more open education, the latter group, as perceived by the teachers, tended to be more traditional.

Development/Selection of Materials

Three separate categories are included in the section on materials. These involve the teacher's part in the development of the materials being used in the class and separate categories for student involvement in development and selection. Openness in education is expected to be facilitated when greater involvement of both groups occurs. The statements for the teacher involvement in the development of the materials were:

- There is little involvement of teachers in developing materials, i.e., materials in use are ready-to-use "packages."
- There is some involvement of teachers in developing materials, i.e., materials in use are things chosen by teachers, students, or others from a wide variety of sources in a ready-to-use form.
- There is a great deal of involvement of teachers in developing materials, i.e., materials in use have been developed, created, or adapted by teachers specifically for situations which arose in the classroom.

In this component, only one alternative could be chosen. The responses from the elementary teachers were generally scattered across the three alternatives and there was little difference between the experimental and comparison teachers in this regard; some had considerable involvement and some had nearly none. (Table 7) At the middle school level, however, there was a great deal of involvement of the ESP teachers in the creation and development of the materials in their classes, while the comparison teachers had experienced much less involvement. At the high school level, the experimental teachers reported substantial involvement and the comparison teachers rated varying degrees of development across the three alternatives.

Table 7: Distribution of Teacher Perceived Self Involvement in the Development of Materials Used in their Classes*

Level/Group/School		Total N	Little Involvement		Some Involvement		Great Involvement	
			N	%	N	%	N	%
Elementary	ESP A	11	3	27	4	36	4	36
	ESP B	10	3	30	4	40	3	30
	ESP C	10	0	0	3	30	7	70
All ESP Elementary		31	6	19	11	35	14	45
Elementary	Comp E	6	1	17	3	50	2	33
	Comp F	6	2	33	2	33	2	33
All Comparison Elem.		12	3	25	5	42	4	33
Middle	ESP G	13	0	0	1	8	12	92
	Comp H	7	3	43	1	14	3	43
Secondary	ESP I	5	0	0	1	20	4	80
	Comp J	5	2	40	1	20	2	40

*Because of rounding, some rows do not total 100%.

Student involvement in the development of materials utilized the same statements as those listed for teachers with the word students simply substituting for the word teachers in them. The general characteristic of this analysis was that students at the elementary and middle school levels have very little involvement in the development, creation, or adaption of the materials with which they are taught. (Table 8) There were no appreciable differences between ESP and comparison nor between the two levels of schooling.

Table 8: Distribution of Teacher Perceived Student Involvement in the Development of Materials Used in their Classes*

Level/Group/School		Total N	Little Involvement		Some Involvement		Great Involvement	
			N	%	N	%	N	%
Elementary	ESP A	11	8	73	2	19	1	9
	ESP B	10	8	80	2	20	0	0
	ESP C	10	6	60	4	40	0	0
All ESP Elementary		31	14	71	8	26	1	3
Elementary	Comp E	6	4	67	1	17	1	17
	Comp F	6	4	67	1	17	1	17
All Comparison Elem.		12	8	67	2	17	2	17
Middle	ESP G	13	10	77	2	17	1	8
	Comp H	7	7	100	0	0	0	0
Secondary	ESP I	5	2	40	1	20	2	40
	Comp J	5	3	60	1	20	1	20

*Because of rounding, some rows do not total 100%.

The comparison high school also showed little student involvement in the development of the materials for the classes. Some differentiation was found in the ESP high school, however, with a tendency toward increased involvement. Because of the small cell size, the two could not be said to be substantially different.

In the same vein, teachers were asked what involvement students had in the selection of their study materials. Five alternative responses were provided:

- Students choose for themselves from all the materials available and may bring in materials from outside the classroom.
- Students choose from alternatives suggested by the teacher.
- Students are assigned materials prescribed for them individually.
- Students are assigned materials prescribed for members of their subgroup of the class.
- Students are assigned materials prescribed for all members of their class.

The statements are graduated from the most open, the first statement, to the least open, the last statement.

The secondary classrooms presented the least open on this measure, followed closely by the middle classrooms. (Table 9) A few individual and subgroup prescription of materials were noted in the middle school. There was no appreciable difference between experimental and comparison at these levels.

Table 9: Distribution of Teacher Perceived Student Involvement in the Selection of Class Materials*

Level/Group/School		Total N	Chooses all		Chooses Alternatives		Individual Assigned		Subgroup Assigned		Class Assigned	
			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Elementary	ESP A	11	1	9	1	9	3	27	4	36	2	18
	ESP B	10	2	20	2	20	1	10	3	30	2	20
	ESP C	10	0	0	1	10	2	20	4	40	3	30
All ESP Elementary		31	3	10	4	13	6	19	11	35	7	23
Elementary	Comp E	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	67	2	33
	Comp F	6	0	0	0	0	1	17	3	50	2	33
All Comparison Elem.		12	0	0	0	0	1	8	7	58	4	33
Middle	ESP G	13	0	0	1	8	2	15	2	15	8	62
	Comp H	7	0	0	0	0	1	14	2	29	4	57
Secondary	ESP I	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	20	4	80
	Comp J	5	0	0	0	0	1	20	0	0	4	80

*Because of rounding, some rows do not total 100%.

Some incidence of all the alternatives was found in the ESP elementary schools' classrooms. Assignment to subgroups within a class was the most frequently marked but some individually assigned and class as a whole assignment were reported. The comparison schools were more heavily subgroup assigned but use of class as a whole materials also occurred. The experimental classes tended to be more open than comparison.

In summary, there was little difference between the comparison and experimental teachers' perceptions about the development and selection of materials. At the elementary level, teachers in both groups experienced some involvement. Students were not appreciably involved in this process nor

in the selection of their materials in the class studies. In the latter, the teachers perceived subgroup assignment to be the most frequent but class as a whole remained a sizable proportion in the classes. The experimental classrooms, as reported, were slightly more open than comparison on the selection of materials.

At the middle and high schools, teachers were quite involved in the development of the materials and the experimental teachers reported a higher frequency of involvement than did those in comparison. Students were perceived to be little involved in the process, however. Class as a whole assignment of study materials was preponderant for the secondary level and there was not much difference between the perceptions of the experimental and comparison teachers on this measure.

Teacher Focus

The teacher focus of the dimensions of schooling questionnaire is designed to measure the size of student groups addressed by the teacher. Three statements are provided, noting the proportions of time the teacher directed attention to:

- the class as a whole,
- subgroups within the class, and
- individual students.

The elementary teachers, whether experimental or comparison, saw their major focus as subgroups within the class. (Table 10) Those teaching the experimental classes directed somewhat more attention to individuals than those in the comparison classes. Some class as a whole practices existed in both groups.

Table 10: Distribution of Perceived Teacher Focus Practices

Level/Group/School	Total N	Class as a Whole	Subgroups of Class	Individual Students
		Av. %	Av. %	Av. %
Elementary ESP A	11	17	53	30
ESP B	10	27	49	24
ESP C	10	20	42	38
All ESP Elementary	31	21	48	31
Elementary Comp E	6	12	76	12
Comp F	6	20	63	17
All Comparison Elem.	12	16	69	15
Middle ESP G	13	30	15	55
Comp H	7	52	28	20
Secondary ESP I	5	17	41	42
Comp J	5	57	8	35

Although some experimental middle school teachers focused on the class as a whole, the majority attended primarily to individuals. The reverse was true for the comparison middle school where class as a whole was still the main teacher focus. The experimental high school teachers were divided with some in each category. Half the comparison high school teachers were directing their attention to the class as a whole. Thus,

a fairly strong tendency appeared at the middle and secondary levels with experimental moving more toward open classes than comparison.

Teacher Role

In the teacher role component of the dimensions of schooling questionnaire, each teacher was asked to indicate the proportion of each role utilized in the classroom as it was functioning at that time:

- teacher serves primarily as a resource person
- teacher serves as a discussion leader on topics initiated by the students
- teacher serves as a discussion leader on topics selected by the teacher
- teacher serves as a presenter of planned lessons

These were expected to be in approximately descending order of openness in educational practices by the authors of the instrument.

The perceived teacher roles in the elementary schools showed wide variability, with at least some of each role used in the studied schools. (Table 11) Thus, considerable independence of role was a characteristic of that group of teachers. Teachers as presenter of lessons was the major role reported for both ESP and comparison elementary groups.

Table 11: Distribution of Perceived Teacher Role Practices

Level/Group/School		Total N	Lesson Presenter	Discussion: own topics	Discussion: Student topics	Resource Person
			Av. %	Av. %	Av. %	Av. %
Elementary	ESP A	11	46	15	18	21
	ESP B	10	28	26	22	24
	ESP C	10	31	31	18	20
All ESP Elementary		31	35	24	19	22
Elementary	Comp E	6	56	14	11	19
	Comp F	6	43	20	18	19
All Comparison Elem.		12	50	17	14	19
Middle	ESP G	13	23	11	16	50
	Comp H	7	28	30	20	22
Secondary	ESP I	5	10	13	29	48
	Comp J	5	58	14	6	22

The majority role of the middle school experimental teachers was resource person. Lesson presenter, the least open of the roles, was still practiced 23% of the time in the ESP group, however. Utilization of roles was widely variable in the comparison middle school with no overwhelming preference for any one. The experimental group tended to be somewhat more toward the open end of the spectrum than did the comparison.

Only two of the roles were marked by most of the experimental secondary teachers: discussion leader on student initiated topics and resource person. The latter accounted for 50% and considerable openness was noted for this group. The comparison teachers, on the other hand, declared themselves primarily presenters of planned lessons with resource

person second most frequent but accounting for only 22% of the time.

Student Pacing

The question for the student pacing component was: At what pace are students expected to work? The statements, though, provide alternatives on how the pace is determined:

- The student is expected to work at a pace set for all members of the class.
- The student is expected to work at a pace set for the members of his subgroup.
- The student works at a pace prescribed for him individually.
- The student sets his own pace.

Not all educators would agree that this forms an interval scale but the instrument authors saw these as of graduated openness with the last the most open.

As had been true on most of the other measures for the elementary teachers, subgroup pacing was the most prevalent in this study. (Table 12) The comparison group percentage was much higher than experimental on subgroup pacing. The difference lay primarily in the number of teachers reporting individually prescribed pacing; comparison was lower than experimental. Pace set by class and student sets his own pace were marked infrequently by teachers of either group.

Table 12: Distribution of Perceived Student Pacing Practices

Level/Group/School		Total N	Class Pace		Subgroup Pace		Individually Prescribed		Student Sets Own Pace	
			Av.	%	Av.	%	Av.	%	Av.	%
Elementary	ESP A	11	2		45		40		13	
	ESP B	10	8		34		32		25	
	ESP C	10	7		44		29		20	
All ESP Elementary		31	5		42		34		19	
Elementary	Comp E	6	11		70		13		6	
	Comp F	6	8		56		27		9	
All Comparison Elem.		12	9		63		20		8	
Middle	ESP G	13	15		15		25		45	
	Comp H	7	50		10		13		27	
Secondary	ESP I	5	11		5		52		32	
	Comp J	5	73		5		21		1	

The variation in the student pacing reported between the ESP and comparison school classrooms was great. Experimental tended toward the open end of the spectrum presented by the statements and comparison tended toward the less open end.

The same general pattern was true for the secondary classrooms. The ESP teachers perceived individually prescribed pacing and student sets his own pace as most prevalent in their classes. Comparison teachers noted a high proportion, 73%, for the pace set for the class as a whole. The two appeared quite different at this level.

Assistance to Students

This component views the student to student assistance as the most innovative and teacher assistance to students as the least. While there may be some practical questions raised about exact points on the scale, the use of peers to help with the day to day academic work of other students is gaining in popularity, and the combination of the several assistance modes should lead to important general inferences about openness. The statements included:

- Students frequently seek independent assistance from other students.
- There is occasional student to student assistance on a somewhat formal, teacher initiated basis.
- Assistance almost always comes from the teacher.

The percentages of use of the different assistance modes were about equally divided for the three experimental and one of the comparison elementary schools. (Table 13) In the other comparison school, however, assistance overwhelmingly came from the teacher, almost to the exclusion of the others.

Table 13: Percentage of Teacher Reported Utilization of the Assistance to Students Modes

Level/Group/School		Total N	Teacher Assistance	Students Occasionally	Students Frequently
			Av. %	Av. %	Av. %
Elementary	ESP A	11	34	30	36
	ESP B	10	39	32	29
	ESP C	10	40	31	29
All ESP Elementary		31	37	31	32
Elementary	Comp E	6	81	14	5
	Comp F	6	47	25	47
All Comparison Elem.		12	64	20	26
Middle	ESP G	13	38	16	46
	Comp H	7	25	23	52
Secondary	ESP I	5	36	14	50
	Comp J	5	54	18	28

The percentages of assistance to students categories were similar for the two middle schools, with frequent student to student help more in evidence than in the elementary classes. The experimental high school teachers interviewed reported more student to student assistance than did the comparison, in which more than half the assistance came from the teacher.

Summary: Perceived Classroom Practices

Looking at the several measures together, there was little difference between the experimental and comparison elementary teacher perceptions. They tended toward the indices that were associated with "open" classrooms. One comparison elementary school was rather consistently less open than the other four in the study.

The middle and secondary experimental classrooms were quite open, according to the teachers' perceptions. They were reported to be more open than the comparison classrooms, which exhibited a general tendency toward the traditional classroom setting.

Findings from Corollary Research

During the same period, fall 1974, classroom observations were conducted via the Modified Observation Schedule and Record, which included some of the dimensions of schooling categories reported under teacher perceptions. The report for that set of observations found few differences between the treatment and comparison teachers on the measures. (12) Generally, the findings for fall 1974 were confined to the elementary schools and included:

- Elementary teachers in both groups placed primary emphasis on working with subgroups within a class; ESP showed slightly more attention to individuals than did the comparison teachers.

The ESP teachers perceived their individualization practices as more prevalent than those observed but the differences were not great. That is, there was relatively close agreement between what the teachers said they were doing and what was observed.

- The observations found Spanish usage to be a minor element in the experimental elementary classrooms. There was no difference between experimental and comparison classrooms.

In summary, the directions of the perceived and observed class emphases, when taken as a whole, were similar in the treatment and comparison classrooms. The two measures coincided on attention to subgroups in the elementary classes. The perceived and observed variations were greater at the middle school, with subgroup and individual attention slightly greater in the ESP middle school than in comparison. In the high schools, attention to the class as a whole was prevalent in both the experimental and comparison classrooms. Some subgroup attention was both perceived and observed but it was minor when compared to class as a whole in both high schools.

CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The Edgewood School Plan personnel, principals, and some of the teachers, students, and parents were involved in a series of planning exercises to redirect the efforts of the program. A needs assessment survey, carried out by the internal evaluation staff of ESP, formed the basis for the examinations of the operation. These efforts led to the formulation of a new thrust, the communications skills program, which would integrate the several language arts areas into all subject matter, and further, would provide an interdisciplinary approach to education generally.

The external evaluation team planned a pre and post measurement of the process of implementation, interviewing the ESP staff, principals, and teachers early in the fall and again in the spring to determine their perceptions of the new thrust and its functioning. Similarly, classroom observations were conducted to detect changes that might occur as a result of the new program. The production of curricular materials was discontinued shortly after the first interviews were conducted, thus the spring measurement was not undertaken. The interim investigation, however, was important as a part of the overall study of the process of change within the Edgewood School Plan, and it provided integrative data for other research being conducted.

Discussion

The Edgewood School Plan staff members perceived their primary goals for a new thrust, the communications skills program, as improving the education of the students and to accomplish this by utilizing the students' home language (Spanish), making the environment more positive, and very importantly, making the education of these pupils more relevant to their needs. Bilingualism through the use of both English and Spanish in the classrooms, and by the teaching of reading in Spanish, was to be an important element in the program. Individualization was to become the major approach to the education of these largely Mexican American students.

The experimental program staff members felt reasonably confident about their abilities to carry out such a program. They perceived a mixed receptivity climate for the program, with themselves, the principals, and the internal evaluation team rated high in commitment and ability. The school board and administration of the district, and the ESP teachers and students were perceived as somewhat less committed and able. The opinions about parents varied from undecided about the new program to highly committed to its goals.

The principals of the five implementing schools in the communications skills program perceived the goals about the same as did the experimental staff but they placed much more emphasis on the improvement of reading and the classroom climate than on bilingualism. Their concerns for the program tended to be managerial: sufficiency and timing of the curricular materials and the training of the teaching staff. The principals perceived most of the reference groups about alike, with increased commitment and ability ratings for the school board and administration, and

slightly lowered ratings for the internal evaluation component of ESP. The climate for the communications skills program, then, was perceived by the principals to be generally positive for the introduction of that new program.

The implementation teachers in the ESP schools perceived the goals much as did their principals; improved reading was their major concern. As with the principals, also, they placed little emphasis on bilingualism except as a classroom management tool. Their concerns about the program being implemented were quality, quantity, and timeliness of the provision of the curricular materials, again much like the concerns of the principals. The teacher ratings of the reference groups' commitment and ability almost duplicated those of the principals with the exception that they rated their principals higher than did the principals themselves.

Modification of the classroom climate was expected as a benefit of the new communications skills program. The implementing teachers were asked to describe their class procedures and practices by way of their perceptions. They perceived themselves as utilizing more Spanish than previously and moving more toward individualization of instruction. A similar group of comparison teachers, responding to the same instrument, described themselves in much the same terms as the implementing teachers.

Findings from a parallel study of the elementary classrooms, with trained observers studying some of the same dimensions as the teachers had answered in their interviews, found the perceptions to be directionally congruent with the observation results of that semester. The only important differences were that there was no significant difference between the experimental and comparison classes on observed individualization practices even though some differences were perceived. Similarly, the experimental and comparison groups utilized about the same amount of Spanish in the classroom and this was relatively minor in relationship to the amount of English spoken.

Conclusions

The study found a generally favorable climate for the introduction of the new communications skills program in the experimental schools. The interviewed groups agreed on the goals of improving reading performance and individualizing instruction to meet the needs of the students. The coincidence of these was important since the new thrust emphasized both features in its conceptualization. Implementation should have been facilitated.

A goal of furthering bilingualism differed between the ESP staff on the one hand, and principals and teachers on the other, but only in degree. The experimental program staff saw this as of high priority, while the other two groups perceived it as of secondary importance or as primarily a classroom management tool. While this would appear to be a potential source of conflict, the effect was probably minimized since most of the curricular materials for the new program were in English. Production of the Spanish materials had not been completed. Classroom observations by an external evaluation team found relatively minor Spanish usage in

either management or instruction. Since the ESP staff had expected this to occur, it should not, and did not appear, to be a source of serious conflict or interference with implementation.

Although there was some differences in the perceptions of the interviewed groups about the commitment to the experimental program in general and to the new communications skills program, these tended to be of degree rather than indications of open resistance. The ESP staff was seen as committed and able, thus their efforts should have been received in a relatively open climate. The principals were perceived similarly, thus the linkage between the change agents, the experimental school staff members, and the implementors, the teachers, should have been satisfactory for the innovation. Teachers were perceived by themselves and the other reference groups as less favorably inclined toward or able to carry out the new program. A concern voiced by all the principals was for teacher orientation and training for implementation. Although forty-nine teachers were reported to be implementing communications skills materials in their classrooms, that was not the case. Only one-third was using the materials as the primary vehicle of instruction; one-seventh was not using them at all. Thus despite a generally positive climate for the introduction, the one perceived weakness in the system was borne out and implementation resulted considerably less than the expectation.

The principals and teachers reported strong concern about the provisions of the curricular materials in time to continue the program. Their concerns were realized when the experimental school staff found it impossible to write and reproduce the required quantity and no more appeared. Although the interview data did not provide a definite linkage between the "fear of no more materials" and the low or no implementation by a majority of the teachers, it may have been present.

Absolute conclusions were not expected from this interim study of a new project nor should they be inferred. Two major implications for practitioners appear warranted, however. One is that an educational system is not much different from any other and that a weak part of a system can be expected to reduce results even though the rest of the system may appear highly favorable. In the case of education, in which teachers provide nearly all the input to students and thus largely control the product, they cannot be taken for granted. Avoidance of failure by teaching what they know best, as found in many studies of teacher performance, would appear to have been an important factor in this study.

The second implication may well be related to the first; teachers may feel less capable of implementing a program for which they do not have the materials to study from the initiation to the conclusion of a program. Most teachers probably do not perceive a large goal such as "improving academic achievement," especially as measured by standardized tests, as something that can be judged by six weeks materials. Further, their experience with partial curriculum probably also mitigates against "wholehearted enthusiasm" and may result in more caution in adoption than is anticipated. A compounding effect may well occur, potentially reducing the benefits from a carefully designed program.

Finally, consideration should be given to the future effects of a discontinued program. This study did not investigate this potential problem but practitioners should consider it in their plans for changes in the instructional practices or content in their schools.

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APPENDIX A

Items of the Interview Guide
for
ESP staff, principals, and teachers
reported in this study*

*The response spacing for this facsimile was reduced from that in the original instrument.

No. _____

Interview Guide

I. Program Planning and Definitions

1. Briefly describe the planning process used by ESP after the November, 1973 retreat.

8. In your opinion, what has been the most useful product of the planning to date?

9. How would you describe the nature of the planning process during the 1974-1975 school year?

   a. Structure:

   b. Procedure:

   c. Quality:

10. What do you think are the major program priorities for the 1974-1975 school year? (List in order of highest to lowest.)

    Highest

    Lowest

14. What specifically do you believe ESP will be able to achieve during the forthcoming school year?

15. What do you believe ESP will be able to accomplish over the life of the program?

II. ESP Staff, Programs

9. Based on your experience would you characterize the following groups as very helpful, fairly helpful, not very helpful in designing and implementing the CSP.

	Very Helpful	Fairly Helpful	Not Very Helpful	Don't Know
Board				
Administration				
ESP Central Staff				
Teachers				
Parents				

11. Who should get most of the credit for whatever is good about the program? (List by positions in order of help given.)

Most help _____

_____

Least help _____

_____

12. Who should get most of the blame for whatever is bad about the program?

17. What do you believe to be the major weaknesses of the ESP staff? (List in order of severity.)

Greatest weakness _____

_____

18. What are the major strengths of the ESP staff? (List in order of importance.)

Most important _____

_____

Least important _____

_____

Form A

Comparative Reference Group Attitudes

23. [All interviewees to respond to all except where blocked.]

As we study this new program in Edgewood, we need your honest opinion on the persons and groups working in it. As I call off each one, please respond by answering None (0), Low (1), Medium (2), High (3), Don't know (4), Refuse to answer (5), according to the way you feel. We guarantee that no one will know your answer.

REFERENCE GROUP OR PERSON	Committed to changing education	Committed to ESP	Active work in support of ESP	Ability to direct or carry out ESP	Ability to direct or carry out CSP	Influence on ESP Priorities
Board as a group				X	X	
Administration						
ESP Central Staff						
ESP Principals (group)						
ESP Teachers (group)						
ESP Parents				X	X	
Students in ESP	X			X	X	
ESP Principals Individually*						
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

*Principals' names were listed in the original.

VII. Parents

1. Have the parents been involved in planning the new curriculum for the CSP?

   a. Yes __ No __ Don't know __

   b. If yes, to what extent?

   100% ___ 75% ___ 50% ___ 25% ___

   OR

   Involved in most phases ____ (Check off one only)
   Involved in about half ____
   Occasionally involved ____
   Involved superficially ____
   None at all ____

2. How would you describe the parents' reactions to the CSP?

   a. Very favorable ___ Favorable ___ Undecided ___

   Unfavorable ___ Very unfavorable ___

VIII. Communication Skills Program Implementing Teachers Section

1. Is your classroom currently participating in the ESP Communications Skills Program?

   Yes ____

   No ____

   Don't know ____

3. Do you currently use ESP Communications Skills Program Curricula?

   All of the time _____
   About half of the time _____
   Less than half of the time _____
   Very few times _____
   None _____

5. How much exposure do students in your classroom have to the following?

   (a) major text

   high ____
   medium ____
   low ____
   none ____

   (b) communication skills curricula

   high ____
   medium ____
   low ____
   none ____

16. Do you feel being an ESP implementing teacher demands

(1) the same amount of work in the classroom _____
(2) less amount of work in the classroom _____
(3) more amount of work in the classroom _____

17. Are needed materials for Communications Skills provided on a timely basis?

Always ____
Frequently ____
Rarely ____
Never ____

APPENDIX B

Items from
Dimensions of Schooling Questionnaire
for
Implementing and Comparison Teachers*

*The response spacing for this facsimile was reduced from that in the original instrument.

Dimensions of Schooling Questionnaire
for
Implementing and Comparison Teachers

1. Assessment Procedures: How is student progress evaluated?

	%
A. No formal tests are used; evaluation is based on work samples and anecdotal reports.	____
B. Evaluation instruments used were developed in this classroom.	____
C. Evaluation instruments used were developed within the school (by other teachers or in other years).	____
D. Standardized (commercial) instruments are used.	____

2. Timing of Assessment: When does the assessment of student progress take place?

A. Assessment takes place at a few specified intervals (e.g., at the end of each term).	____
B. Assessment takes place at more frequent intervals (e.g., monthly or weekly).	____
C. Assessment may take place at any time (e.g., depending on pupil readiness).	____

3. Assessment Focus: What size groups are assessed?

A. Assessment procedures are the same for all students in the school.	____
B. Assessment procedures are the same for all students in the class.	____
C. Assessment procedures are the same for each student within a subgroup of the class, but differ from subgroup to subgroup.	____
D. Assessment procedures are different for each student in the class.	____

4. Student Pacing: At what pace are students expected to work?

A. The student is expected to work at a pace set for all members of the class.	____
B. The student is expected to work at a pace set for the members of his subgroup.	____
C. The student works at a pace prescribed for him individually.	____
D. The student sets his own pace.	____

%

5. Development of Materials: How much personal involvement do teachers have in the development of materials for the classroom? (Choose one statement only.)

   A. There is little involvement of teachers in developing materials, i.e., materials in use are ready-to-use "packages" (reading series, set of math texts, computer-assisted instruction). ____
   B. There is some involvement of teachers in developing materials, i.e., materials in use are things chosen by teachers, students, or others from a wide variety of sources in a ready-to-use form (books not in series, an abacus, a film). ____
   C. There is a great deal of involvement of teachers in developing materials, i.e., materials in use have been developed, created, or adapted by teachers specifically for situations which arose in the classroom (collections of objects for use in working out math problems, books, tape recordings, or films made by teachers). ____

6. Development of Materials: How much personal involvement do students have in the development of materials for the classroom? (Choose one statement only.)

   (Items A, B, and C from section 5 are used with the word student substituted for teacher.)

7. Selection of Materials: How much are students involved in selecting materials with which they work? (Choose one statement only.)

   A. Students <u>choose</u> for themselves from all the materials available and may bring in materials from outside the classroom. ____
   B. Students <u>choose</u> from alternatives suggested by the teacher. ____
   C. Students are <u>assigned</u> materials prescribed for them individually. ____
   D. Students are <u>assigned</u> materials prescribed for members of their subgroup of the class. (Same materials for all members in the same subgroup; different materials for each subgroup.) ____
   E. Students are <u>assigned</u> materials prescribed for all members of their class. (Same materials for all students in the same class.) ____

z

8. Teacher Focus: What size group of students is addressed by the teacher at any one time?

   A. The teacher directs attention to the class as a whole. ____
   B. The teacher directs attention to subgroups of the class. ____
   C. The teacher directs attention to individual students. ____

9. Teacher Role: What role does the teacher play in helping the student to learn?

   A. The teacher acts as a resource person to whom students come when seeking information and ideas. ____
   B. The teacher acts as a discussion leader on topics initiated by the students. ____
   C. The teacher acts as a discussion leader on topics of his/her choice. ____
   D. The teacher acts as a presenter of planned lessons. ____

10. Assistance to Students: How much do students help other students with their school work?

   A. Students independently seek assistance in their school work from peers or other students; this is a frequent occurrence in the class and is accepted and encouraged as a valid way of seeking solutions or of exploration. ____
   B. There is occasional student-to-student assistance on a somewhat formal teacher-initiated basis, e.g., the teacher assigned a good reader to help a poor reader or arranges for a tutor. ____
   C. Assistance almost always comes from the teacher. ____